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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 5 November 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the proposals on the Middle East, "A code of peace and security in the Middle East", put forward by E. M. Primakov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, in Cairo on 31 October 1997.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 37 and 81, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) S. LAVROV

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ANNEX

A code of peace and security in the Middle East

Proposals by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation put forward in Cairo on 31 October 1997

In the opinion of the Russian co-sponsor, the adoption of a code of conduct in the area of security for the Middle East could substantially facilitate progress towards a just and comprehensive settlement. The code might include the following elements:

(1) Without a peaceful settlement in all the areas of negotiation in the Middle East peace process, the stable and lasting security of each of the States in the region cannot be guaranteed;

(2) No State in the region can achieve national security solely by means of military hardware;

(3) Security for some cannot be based on impairing the security of others, including in the settlement of territorial disputes;

(4) Given the direct or indirect involvement of the countries of the region, viewed in broad terms, in the Middle East conflict, the security of the parties to the conflict cannot be viewed in isolation: the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkey, northern Africa and the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, including Iraq, must be involved in a "Middle East zone of peace";

(5) The security of the countries in the Middle East cannot be based on opposed strategic unions or groupings with support from external forces or structures;

(6) International law is the basis for security and stability: commitment and continuity with respect to bilateral and multilateral treaties and agreements is vital for a peaceful settlement to the Middle East conflict;

(7) There must be decisive action against all forms and varieties of terrorism and extremism, whatever the reasons, including religious reasons, that may motivate them: the peace must not be held hostage by terrorists;

(8) The countries of the region must renounce weapons of mass destruction so that it becomes a zone free of weapons of mass destruction;

(9) A reciprocal reduction is required in the military budgets of the regional States, with the resources being reallocated for development, including multilateral regional economic cooperation: peace with one's neighbours is cheaper and more advantageous than maintaining a first-class army;

(10) There must be unconditional mutual respect for the unique cultural and religious heritage of each people - freedom of religion for all faiths and

unimpeded access for believers to the holy places in Jerusalem and other parts of the region;

(11) There must be a just settlement of the region's humanitarian problems, including a settlement of the refugee problem that is acceptable to all parties;

(12) Regional economic cooperation must be developed and an integrated economic system for the Middle East must be established.

E. M. PRIMAKOV